Director's Report

by Rima Dael

It's been an exciting year at CDSS. My visits to camp this summer, and my ongoing work with the Board and staff, has confirmed for me the importance of the job we do supporting traditional dance, music and song. As we continue to plan for Centennial events in 2015 and look at opportunities to strengthen our work by creating strategic partnerships with other national organizations, I've been doing some reading and research, and have found an exciting report from the James Irvine Foundation. In part, it says:

"People are engaging in the arts in increasingly active and expressive ways. There is a growing awareness in the arts field of what has come to be known as participatory arts practices. Arts funders and arts organizations are examining this seismic shift toward a participatory arts culture and figuring out how to adapt in new and creative ways that will have long-term benefits to arts organizations and the people they serve." *

That's just the beginning of this phenomenal report. You can access it at http://www.irvine.org/images/stories/pdf/grantmaking/Getting-in-on-the-act-2011OCT19.pdf. I am so very excited with it because it is a great model to discuss what we instinctively know in our participatory art: we are the audience and the artists. What we do is not spectator art—it is collaborative and creative. I agree with the

report's authors "that the arts organizations that will thrive in our current environment will be the ones who create new and meaningful opportunities for people to engage." Our collaboration with strategic partnerships, and with you, will support what we do into the next generation and beyond.

Speaking of strategic partners, as a first step, we've teamed up with Fractured Atlas, a national nonprofit organization that provides a range of support services for the independent arts community. I'm a big fan of this organization and I am thrilled that we've developed this relationship. Through the Fractured Atlas's Open Arts Network we can offer CDSS members services such as health insurance and online courses. Simply visit http://www.fracturedatlas.org/cdss and fill out the online Associate Membership application. You will instantly become an Associate Member of the nation's fastest growing arts service organization. And it's all free! Thanks to Jeff Martell, CDSS Store and Services Manager, for making this happen.

Finally, please support our year-end appeal, http://www.cdss.org/appeal. If you have not already received a copy in the mail—and even if you have!—you won't want to miss the expanded stories online. Between now and the end of the year, we'll be highlighting personal stories on our blog—personal stories that illuminate the wonderful work your support makes possible, through our scholarships, grants, conferences, strategic partnerships, teacher training and educational resources. We're absolutely counting on your year-end giving to fund these programs in the coming year, so please give generously!

As we approach the holiday season, I have so much to be thankful for in my first six months with CDSS. I am thankful for a dedicated Board and staff, but most of all, I am thankful to YOU, our members

and friends, for your continued passion and support of our work.

My heartfelt thanks, Rima

P.S. Feel free to email your thoughts to me at rima@cdss.org after reading the Irvine Foundation report.



Rima, partially hidden behind her daughter Karana, with Anna Luciano, Family Week, Pinewoods 2012; photo by Erin Nolan

* Brown, A. S., Novak-Leonard, J. L., and Gilbride, S. Getting In On the Act: How arts groups are creating opportunities for active participation (Report, 2011, October, page 2; The James Irvine Foundation)